



# Buzzwords ...

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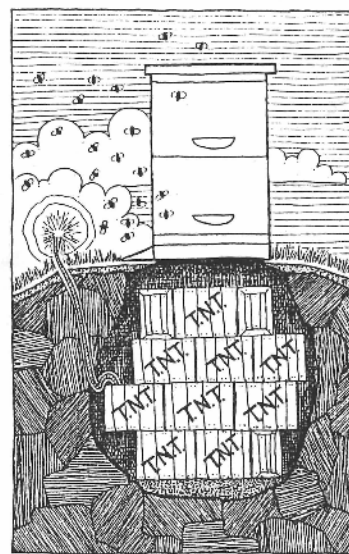
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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

**In this issue ...**

**Buzzwords No 49 February 1993**

- \* **BIO-SECURITY SUBMISSION**
- \* **MANUKA A WEED?**
- \* **WORKER CELLS MEASURED**
- \* **ADAM IS BACK**



*"Radical Requeening"*



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

January is almost gone and beekeepers throughout the length and breadth of New Zealand are still holding their breath wondering whether they will get a surplus honey crop. As your president, I have the opportunity to speak with beekeepers from all over the country and to date the only good crop report I have had is from the west coast of the South Island. Today I was out with the bees putting supers on and there appeared to be a good clover flow. So let's hope that there is still a bit of time left. Maybe the lateness of the season will still give us all a reward for the efforts we have made this year.

Next month New Zealand will be visited by Mr. Tadashi Nakamura, vice president of Akitayahonten Co. Ltd. His company purchased several containers of NZ honey last season and we hope this will become an on-going arrangement. Mr. Nakamura will be accompanied by the

company chemist so I would suggest that everyone they visit take a bit of extra time to polish up their plants.

*Dudley Ward, president*

## BIO-SECURITY: THE NBA RESPONDS

In *Buzzwords 48* we discussed the implications of the proposed Bio-Security Bill on disease control in our industry, and promised that the executive would be making a strong submission on the bill to Parliament.

During the third week of January, executive members Michael Wraight and Nick Wallingford met with Executive Officer Ted Roberts. They reviewed the bill in great detail and together prepared the NBA response.

The response centres on the fact that bio-security is a national asset which maintains New Zealand's competitive advantage in world agricultural markets. It should therefore

be funded on a national level, rather than piecemeal by individual industries or regionally.

The submission also details the long history of protection for our industry under the various Apiaries Acts. Interestingly, the current Apiaries Act will not be entirely done away with until 1996, but some sections, most notably Section 7 (moveable frame hives), 8 (access to be kept clear), 9 (notification of change of location), 17 (bee disease advisory committee for exotics), will be repealed immediately if and when the bill becomes law. The logic behind the repeal of this hodge-podge of Apiaries Act provisions has so far not been satisfactorily explained by the bill's drafters.

The NBA submission also details a number of concerns regarding the administration and payment of disease control programmes (called Pest Management Strategies - PMS in the bill). The government seems to want to have it all its own way with these strategies. On the one hand, the full costs of proposing such strategies falls on the industries concerned, even though the Minister of Agriculture retains the right to decide whether the strategy will be adopted. And on the other hand, any minister can propose and get adopted a PMS, even though the industry concerned may not want it. The only saving grace is that at least the industry wouldn't have to pay for it, but that would be small consolation if the industry was adversely affected by the way the imposed PMS was run.

There is also the problem that the bill makes it very difficult to effectively finance a PMS for an exotic disease. The bill would require the industry involved to set a levy for the cost of an Emergency Response for the disease, even though the industry wouldn't likely know what the response would cost. And the industry couldn't very well be expected to pay a levy every year for the response just on the off-chance that it might occur. That would be prohibitively expensive and make the control of most exotic bee diseases uneconomic.

The NBA submission on the Bio-Security Bill is now being reviewed by your president and will be submitted to the Primary Production Select Committee on February 3, prior to the deadline for submissions of February 5. In the meantime, readers should endeavour to learn as much as possible about the issues involved in the Bio-Security Bill (a letter of enquiry to your local MP would be a good start). Our industry will once again be lobbying selected MP's about the bill and branches may soon be asked to help.

## WORKER CELL DIAMETER

Optimum diameter is important in worker bee brood cells. If too small, emerging worker bees will be smaller which may impair their efficiency. If too large, the queen may lay drone brood in them. In New Zealand, to the best of my knowledge, we all use the same standard comb foundation pattern. So we need to be quite sure that it is the best size for our evolving NZ bee stock and conditions.

I have a small scale trial under way where the bees are drawing out their own comb pattern on sheets of smooth (no pattern) wax foundation. So far, the majority of measurements are close to the standard pattern, which has a cell diameter slightly under 5.5 mm. But a proportion of

cells measured are 10% larger, and none are smaller. The larger cells, at 6 mm diameter, are similar in size to the largest pattern tested by Dr. John Harbo (USDA Baton Rouge). Such cells have been shown to produce significantly larger worker bees, so I believe it is worth investigating this phenomena further.

Working alone, it may take me several years to accumulate enough data, and then it would only be relevant to my own stock. With the help of *Buzzwords* readers it can be done more quickly and reliably.

All that is required is to carefully measure the length of 10 adjacent worker brood cells on any piece of freely drawn comb you chance upon or induce your bees to produce. There is considerable variation, so take at least 5 measurements from each comb, and ensure there are no drone cells in the sample. Drone cells, being about 20% larger, are normally obvious. By the way, I am also interested in collecting data on drone cell size.

Your information will be of much greater use if you can include information about:-

1. Type of Bee - race, colour, temperament, queen origin
2. Colony Characteristics - high production, swarms, etc

*Reg Clarke, Blenheim*

## MARKETING NOTES

- Presenter Sharon Crosbie interviewed Dr Peter Molan on her National Radio programme on October 21. Topics covered included manuka honey and the use of honey as an antiseptic for wounds, burns, gastro-enteritis and stomach ulcers. Copies of the interview are available from Replay Radio, Radio NZ, Wellington.

- *Forbes*, the highly influential business magazine, included this item in its April 1992 issue - "Sweet is in. Kelloggs and General Mills have several new lines, including a Honey Gold version of Wheaties. Honey is the golden market bridge with the health pitches of the late eighties. Consumers think honey is healthier than sugar. It isn't; but honey features large on most new cereal packets."

- "An exciting new addition to Vogel's Bread is Vogel's Honey and Oat Bran. Consumer research shows that people love the taste and texture of this extra moist bread with the delicious taste of manuka honey, plus the added goodness of oat bran and barley." (*Grocers' Review*, November 1992)

- Bill Floyd is working on an information kit for the food ingredient industry. The kit will borrow heavily from similar kits already being used successfully by overseas honey industry groups. It doesn't make sense to reinvent the wheel when it comes to honey promotion, and the US Honey Board certainly has shown what can be done to increase consumption by concentrating on the food ingredient industry. Bill is working closely with a selection of people in the NZ food development industry and they will help him put together a customised New Zealand Honey Food Ingredient Kit. The budget for kit development is \$3300.



- Recent export statistics indicate that NZ will have exported a record amount of honey in 1992. The figure will likely be between 2200 and 2300 tonnes.

- On December 8, the Department of Health conducted a seminar in Christchurch on therapeutics. Sue Jenkins attended the meeting on behalf of the NBA. The meeting was called to discuss the Medicines Act, 1981, which is currently being re-drafted. Submissions were called for from 500 selected organisations and individuals in September, 1992, but unfortunately the NBA was not included. Further submissions will be called for in February and this time our association will have a chance to have its say. The problem, of course, is that honey is difficult to classify. Currently honey is covered by the Food Act and under present law cannot therefore also be regulated as a medicine. The marketing committee hopes to change that, but will need all the scientific information available when we present our submission to the Department of Health. If you have any information you believe can assist, please send it to the NBA head office, PO Box 4048, Wellington. Or you can contact Sue Jenkins directly. Her mailing address is PO Box 2, Blenheim (phone/fax 03 578 9325).

- A two-day meeting of the marketing committee will be held in Wellington during the week of February 16 to fully examine the NBA's marketing options. Alan McCaw will chair the meeting.

Sue Jenkins, marketing committee

## MINISTER ON MANUKA

"I mean after all, manuka is merely a weed."

- John Falloon, Minister of Agriculture, explaining on *Rural Report* (26/11/92) why manuka is going to be cut down on the East Cape to make way for *Pinus radiata* plantations (see *Buzzwords* 48).

## GRID REFERENCES (!@#&?)

Beekeepers throughout the country no doubt noticed a big change when it came time to fill out their Statements of Inspection this year. The form now asks you to supply a grid reference for each registered apiary.

Some members have complained that this requirement is just another example of burdensome bureaucracy, and others have commented that the cost of the maps (\$12 each) is too high for just a one-off exercise.

To put the matter straight, the inclusion of grid references in the computerised Apiary Registers actually came about as a result of recommendations made by NBA members who took part in the Nelson Emergency Response in November, 1991. Beekeepers who carried out inspections during the response found that the current level of information - landowner (assuming they have't moved), road name, district - often wasn't enough to quickly locate the apiary in question.

Many NBA members who take part in branch diseaseathons have also realised that the apiary information just isn't

detailed enough. One beekeeper who was on the Nelson response tells the story of how three teams, each assigned to the same 65km long stretch of road in the same inspection district, spent the whole day passing each other in cars as they tried to find apiaries whose only identifying feature was the road name.

As to the price of maps, there's no doubt that the costs are high for some commercial beekeepers (although some are also finding the maps quite handy for "site scouting" purposes). If you don't want to buy the maps, there are several alternatives. The first is to go along to your local office of the Department of Conservation. They are the one government department that will definitely have the 260 Series maps. And normally they will let you look at the maps they use (as opposed to the maps they sell).

Another alternative is to make a visit to your local AAO. Each Apiary District registrar now has a set of 260 series maps covering the whole Apiary District (but not, unfortunately, the rest of the country). AAO's are more than happy to let you use the maps in their office, and rumour has it there may even be some money in the MAF surveillance budget set aside for visits to sort out grid references with beekeepers.

Finally, a note about which maps to use. A few diligent beekeepers have always supplied grid references (and the computer has actually had a grid reference option for quite some time). The only problem is that most of those older grid references were on the old NZMS 1 series maps. Unfortunately these maps have now been superseded by the 260 series, and we have been told by the Department of Survey and Land Information that 1) the old grid numbers don't correspond to the new ones, and 2) there is no easy way to convert them over. They reckon the quickest way to change over is just to get out the new maps and start again (!@#&?).

MAF Quality Management

## FROM THE BRANCHES

The next meeting of the **Auckland** branch will be held on Thursday, March 4, beginning at 7:30 pm at the Papakura Anglican Church Hall (across the Great South Road from the 3 Guys supermarket). The guest speaker will be a Croatian beekeeper presently working in the Auckland area.

The **Hawkes Bay** branch has scheduled its next meeting for Monday, February 8 at the Cruise Club Hall, Lee Road, Taradale. Proceedings get under way at 7.30 pm. The branch is quite concerned about the large number of bee poisonings this spring caused by the use of carbaryl as a thinning spray in apples. The branch believes a grower education programme will be necessary next year so that orchardists learn how to spray the chemical safely and at the right time.

The **Bay of Plenty** branch summer field day is one of the highlights on the beekeeping calendar in the North Island, and this year's event will be no exception. Details are still to be finalised, but you can reserve Saturday, March 6 for an information-packed day centred around the topic "Value-



## HONEY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND

Applications for funding close on 15 August and 15 February. Forms available from the NBA, PO Box 4048, Wellington.

Added Honey". With all the new developments in the field of our most important commodity, this promises to be a field day not to be missed. A further notice giving times and venue will appear in next month's *Buzzwords*.

## THE LATEST ON ADAM

From the comments we've heard it's obvious that a number of *Buzzwords* readers have been more-than-a-little interested in the comings and goings at Buckfast Abbey (see *Buzzwords* 41 and 43). And while we don't want to take up too much of our valuable space with something so far away from home, here (for you avid Adam watchers) is the latest news.

In November Brother Adam published an article in the *British Bee Journal* entitled "Facts and Fiction Concerning My Resignation." In it he says that a number of rumours and assumptions have been circulated concerning his resignation which are "totally at variance with reality." It turns out he was planning to retire three years ago, but then decided to carry on as long as he could because of the proven resistance the Buckfast stock was showing to acarine mite. He wanted to continue his work to show that the stock was also resistant to varroa.

Unfortunately in 1991 he suffered a minor heart attack and that is when he decided he needed an assistant. The person who finally accepted the offer was his long-standing friend and associate, Michael van der Zee. His name was put forward to the abbot, but unfortunately was turned down. Brother Adam then resigned, but not in a feat of pique; Adam just realised he couldn't carry on himself. The decision was made by the Abbot while Adam was in France, and Adam was never given the opportunity to "indicate the consequences that would inevitably arise from their decision."

But that's not the end of it. At the end of the article Adam says that while he has no wish to resume beekeeping, "to save the efforts already initiated concerning the development of a fully dependable resistance to *Varroa jacobsoni* I would consider it my duty to resume my endeavours so long as Providence may determine."

And now it seems that Adam may have been granted his wish. The latest news (December 6) from overseas sources indicates that Adam is back at Buckfast Abbey, working with the bees in at least an advisory capacity. So maybe all is not lost after all! As they say on TV, "We'll keep you posted."

## HORNITZKY CLEARS AIR

As we reported in *Buzzwords* 38, the organism which triggered the Nelson EFB Emergency Response in 1991 turned out to be *Streptococcus faecium*, a bacteria which

closely resembles *Melissococcus pluton*. The final determination of the organism was made by Dr. Michael Hornitzky, honey bee pathologist with the New South Wales Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and a leading authority on EFB.

Unfortunately, however, an article written at the time which appeared in *Bee World* (Vol. 73, No. 1) gave the impression that *M. pluton* was positively identified by Dr. Hornitzky's lab.

Now, *Bee World* is one of the world's most important beekeeping journals, and Dr. Hornitzky thought it was important to clarify this inaccuracy so that overseas authorities didn't get the wrong impression about EFB in New Zealand. So he wrote a letter to *Bee World* which has now appeared in its most recent edition (Vol. 73, No. 3).

According to Dr. Hornitzky, the Nelson EFB "was triggered as a result of the suspect smear rather than any follow-up culture work. As European foulbrood has the ability to spread quickly from hive to hive some action was certainly appropriate with the available diagnostic evidence."

Dr. Hornitzky makes it quite clear that "the fact that *M. pluton* was not cultured from any specimens indicates that New Zealand has not had a confirmed case of European foulbrood. This is important to note as a confirmed case would indicate that European foulbrood has been present in New Zealand... (and that) further disease outbreaks would be expected when conditions were suitable for *M. pluton* to proliferate in those hives."

He ends his letter by pointing out that "a misconception of the diagnostic evidence in this case could be detrimental to the perceived honey bee disease status of New Zealand and the events leading to the activation of the New Zealand Exotic Disease and Pest Response."



## BUZZWORDS IS ...

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